



A
BLUE GRASS
BEAUTY

GABRIELLE
• E •
JACKSON

Frances from Magic
Gross Ph.D.

APR 25 1933

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A BLUE GRASS BEAUTY





Frontispiece—A Blue Grass Beauty.

"A YOUNG MAN ASKED, 'CAN'T I HELP A BIT, HERE?'"

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A BLUE GRASS BEAUTY



By Gabrielle E. Jackson

· ILLUSTRATED ·

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WHERE THE BLUE GRASS
WAVES

CHAPTER I

WHERE THE BLUE GRASS WAVES

“O H, Fred, is n’t he a beauty! I know that we have never had anything to compare with him. And such a disposition, too. I don’t believe anything *could* make him show a disagreeable trait now, do you?”

The speaker was a girl of about eighteen years of age, tall, slight, and in coloring a perfect brunette. She stood leaning upon the bars of a large pasture where ten or more horses were enjoying their freedom, and beside her upon the grass lay a side-saddle and bridle. Evidently she had just dismounted, for she wore her habit, and held in her hand the riding-cap she had just removed from the soft, seal-brown hair.

The person to whom she spoke was very like her, excepting his eyes, which were a decided gray, and looked out upon the world in a manner to make others hesitate before telling an untruth. It did not need a second glance to pronounce them brother and sister.

“I don’t know; that all depends,” answered the man, shaking his head doubtfully. “If some fellow with sense buys him, well and good. But if some idiot gets him, I should n’t like to answer for the consequences. He is pretty high-strung.”

“Of course, I know that, but just see what he lets *me* do with him! Just *anything*.”

“I wish he might fall into Bert Conant’s hands, for then we need have no further concern about him,” continued the man. “But I ’m afraid there is no chance of it. The fellow from New York is clean gone over him, and has offered twice as much as father would have taken from Bert, and Mr. Binwell is sure to accept it. That ’s the worst of these partnerships;

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one man wants to sell his horses to buyers who will take good care of them, and the other won't think of a single thing but the cash to be had. He says Dad 's soft-hearted, but I wish he had a little of the disease himself. He could stand it, and not be hurt a mite.'"

During this conversation the subject of it stood nearly knee-deep in the waving grass of the pasture, sometimes gathering a mouthful, and sometimes pausing to look inquiringly at the pair standing beside the bars, as though to say: "I am sure you are talking about me, and it is n't polite to comment upon anyone right in his presence." Presently he walked slowly toward them, and as he approached with his mouth full of the sweet, fresh grass, he shook his head up and down, as though in greeting.

"Come on, Beauty," said the girl. "I 'm going up to the house now; you 'd better bid me good-by like a gentleman." He was well named, for never had his native State turned out a handsomer creature. He was a little over fifteen

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hands high, clean limbed as a deer, with a body like satin and a head which would have made Herring exclaim over it, for the eyes fairly talked, and the delicate, sensitive nostrils quivered with every emotion. But the expression of the face was, perhaps, the chief charm of the animal, for it was more than mere beauty can give to either beast or man. It was that which is worn only by those creatures who have perfect confidence and love for their fellow-beings whether they be human or brute.

It is a great pity that we cannot see it oftener, and never is it more apparent—or more plainly lacking, as the case may be—than in a horse or a dog. Show me an animal, and no matter whether his master be near at hand or miles away, I will tell you what the master's conduct is toward the creature over which he has control. The eyes and ears will tell it all, as we might see every day of our lives if we took the trouble to observe. It is a look either of perfect mutual understanding, or of perpetual odds;

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and nothing upon earth can be more pathetic when we consider how entirely the creatures must depend upon human beings for their comfort and happiness.

Beauty came up to the bars at the girl's bidding, and resting his velvety muzzle upon her shoulder, stood as still as a statue while she pressed her face against his, and reaching one arm up and around his neck, stroked him gently.

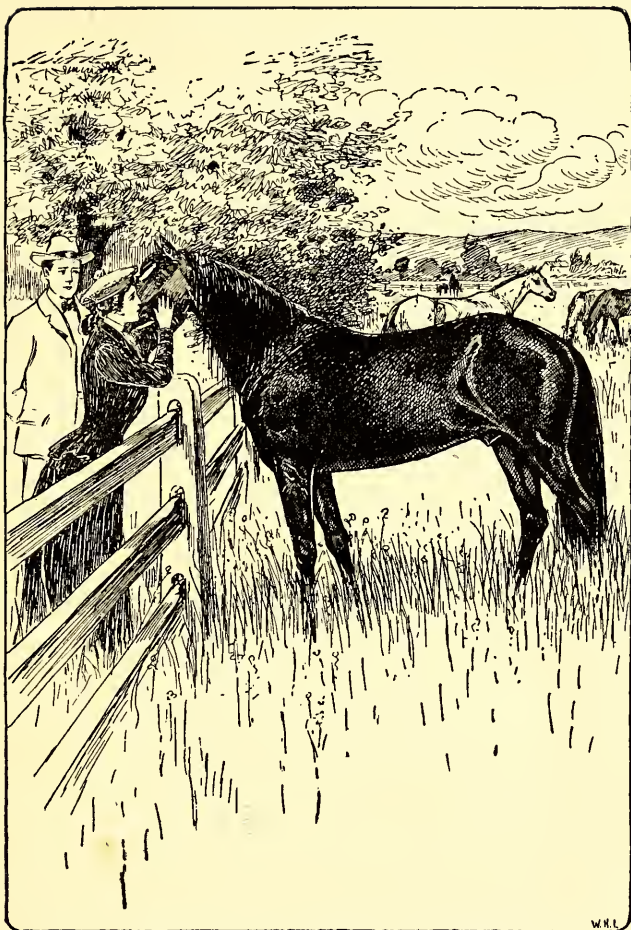
"Beauty, what am I going to do without you?" she asked. "I have helped to make you what you are, and now I just can't let you go North with some one I don't know, and who won't care a bit for you, except as he would for any handsome horse. But *you're* half human, I believe, and I *know* you know a heap more than some *folks*."

"I 'm going to see Bert this evening," said her brother, as he stooped to gather up the saddle and bridle from the ground. "I 'll find out if there 's any chance of Bert's taking him, for I believe I feel nearly as bad as you do at the

thought of letting him go so far away, Bess." He started to leave the pasture. The girl tarried a moment to say a few parting words to the horse, and, gathering up her short riding habit, she ran as lightly as a fairy over the soft turf, and overtaking him slipped one hand through his disengaged arm, clasped her other over it, and taking about two steps to each of his long strides, tripped along beside him.

Bess and Fred Corbin had spent nearly all their lives upon a Kentucky Stock Farm, and knew every stick and stone for miles around. Except to attend their respective colleges, and even these were close to each other, the brother and sister had never been separated. They had played, studied, ridden, rowed, and entered upon their collegiate courses "neck and neck," as their father put it, and the tie between them was unusually strong. Fred was two years her senior, but being the quicker witted of the two, Bess managed to keep up in all things.

Mr. Corbin was half owner of the farm, his



A Blue Grass Beauty.

“‘BEAUTY, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITHOUT YOU?’”

2—*Blue Grass Beauty.*

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partner's home being in Lexington, where he lived, except in summer. From tiny children the brother and sister had loved horses and dogs, and their aunt, who had kept house for Mr. Corbin ever since his wife's death, when the children were very young, said: "They 'd rather eat and sleep in the stables than in the house." The life seemed to agree with them, for it would have been difficult to find two bonnier, healthier young people than Bess and Fred Corbin were at eighteen and twenty years of age.

It was vacation time now, and both were home from college, and with the return to their native air came many little localisms of accent and speech that they rarely used "up North." Day after day they rode or drove together, or helped in the training of the colts.

Bess had achieved a reputation in this line, and rarely did a colt leave "Grassy Ridge," as the farm was called, which did not owe Bess something for its reputation. She used to say that it was because she loved them all so dearly

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that she was able to do more with them than the average person could, and that they understood whatever she said to them. However that might be, certain it was that the horses sold from "Grassy Ridge" were famed far and wide for their dispositions and their paces.

But never had there been Beauty's equal. He was as nearly perfect in all things as it ever falls to the lot of a horse to be. Ever since his colt-hood Bess had taken charge of his education, till now, at four years, he was ready to go out into the wide world and prove her proficiency. She had seen many colts sold from the farm, and had regretted their outgoing more or less, but Beauty's prospective departure grieved her sorely, and she had hoped, far more eagerly than she realized, that their neighbor, her old playmate, Bert Conant, would buy him. But Beauty's price was high, and Bert's purse was not heavy, so the chance of Beauty ever becoming his property seemed improbable. More so than ever now, for a gentleman had just come from New York,

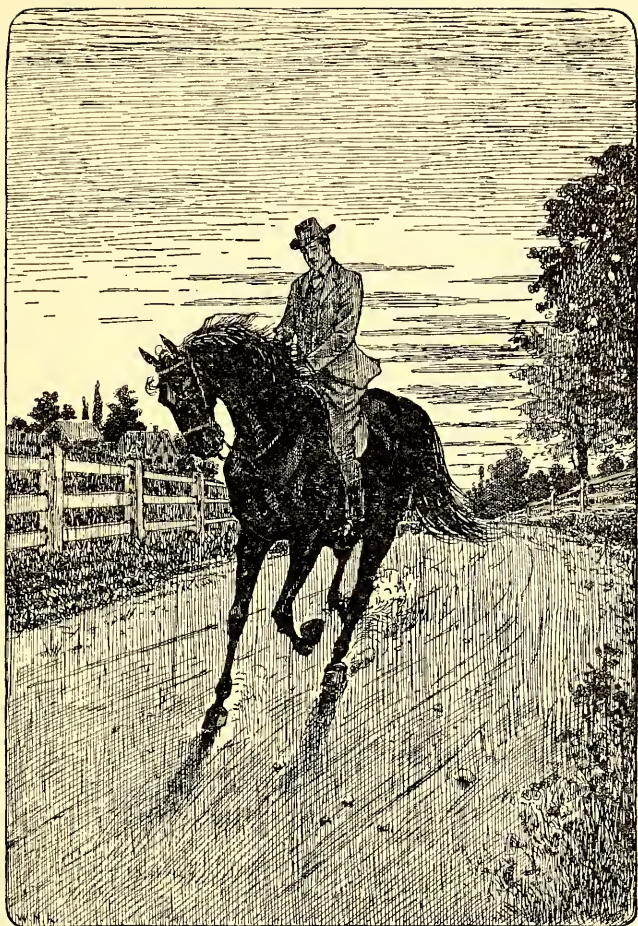
whose purse more than outweighed Beauty himself, and Beauty's fate seemed sealed.

An hour or two after tea that evening Fred made his way to the home of Bert Conant, riding Beauty in order to strengthen the cause he was about to plead. He rode along with the grace and ease of a practiced rider, and making a striking picture against the background of a glorious sunset. Beauty swung onward with the grace of motion peculiar to a perfectly broken horse, now and then tossing his handsome head and giving a loud neigh just for the joy of being alive. He had no fear of being rebuked, for the understanding between horse and man was perfect. His grace was native and the man who rode him prized it at its full value; and his perfect confidence in the sympathy of his master sent a thrill of pleasure through Fred's heart.

"Pretty nice sort of thing to be alive down here, is n't it, Beauty?" he asked, as though addressing a human being, and reaching forward

as they swung along, he laid back a lock of the silky mane which Beauty's joyous toss had disarranged. "Now, if we can only strike a bargain with Bert," he continued aloud, "and keep you down here in God's own country, there will be four of us happy. So put on your most captivating manner, old man, and we 'll see what can be done."

Beauty gave a soft little whinny of assent, and a sweeping wave of his long, beautiful tail, as they turned into a gateway. A moment later Fred slipped from the saddle at Conant's horse-block, to be met by Bert with: "Don't say a single word; I know what has brought you over. I heard from Jess that some one has an eye on Beauty, and the cash with him to back it up." As he spoke he came down from the porch, and taking the horse's muzzle in his hands stroked it gently. Evidently he was an old friend, for Beauty met his advances more than half way. The two men talked long and earnestly, and finally Fred said: "Perhaps I can get father to



A Blue Grass Beauty.

"HE RODE WITH THE GRACE OF A PRACTICED RIDER."

shave his price a little, and you can settle when you are able."

"No; I can't let him do that, and even if he were willing, there 's Mr. Binwell, and you know him as well as I do. It would only make trouble. I 'm afraid it can't be thought of—the old gentleman's bank account is none too heavy as it is, and, for a flourishing barrister, my own leaves considerable to be desired."

Two years ago, Bert Conant had been graduated from the Columbia Law School and returned to his native town to take up the practice of law, believing that he had only to open an office in order to achieve fame and fortune. But Dame Fortune did not seem to have chosen Lexington for an abiding place, and Bert was beginning to learn that one has sometimes to wait long and patiently for that capricious lady to decide upon a permanent residence.

Before the war, the old Conant place had been far-famed for lavish hospitality, but sad changes had taken place, and now little remained of its

former glories. With the boundless hope of twenty-three, Bert saw it all restored, his father surrounded with luxuries which early habit had rendered almost indispensable to him, and himself a prosperous, respected lawyer.

Behind all these dreams arose an ever-recurring picture, in which the principal figure was always a dark-haired, olive-cheeked, laughing-eyed girl. However, all was still tantalizingly vague; the place left much to be desired; the luxuries were still conspicuous by their absence; he was a lawyer all right enough, but the fame and prosperity seemed to hang fire; while the olive-skinned girl was still absorbed in her college fun and her horses, with never anything save a friendly, brotherly sort of fondness for the "boy," as she would no doubt have called him, with whom she had played ever since she could remember, and who had teased and tormented her at times till the olive cheeks burned and she had flown at him like a little wildcat.

The two men talked until darkness fell upon

the land, and when at last Fred turned Beauty's head toward home, stars were twinkling in the sky over their heads, crickets were piping their shrill little songs by the roadside, and dear Mother Nature was singing a lullaby to her myriads of weary children. Off in the distance a watchdog occasionally announced to the quiet world that he, at least, was still alert, and far away in the valley the lights of Lexington glimmered.

Beauty walked quietly on with the long, easy stride peculiar to his race, evidently enjoying the peaceful night, while his master sat silent and thoughtful upon his back, and tried to reason out the contrary moves of fate.

Reaching home, he turned Beauty over to the care of old Jess, the colored man who always spoke to him as though he were one of his children, and then went up to the house, where Bess met him with:

“Does he think he can buy him?”

WHERE HORSE IS KING AND
FASHION QUEEN

CHAPTER II

WHERE HORSE IS KING AND FASHION QUEEN

N EARLY three years had slipped away since the beautiful Summer morning when we first saw Beauty standing beside his young master and mistress at the pasture bars, and eventful years they had been for him, filled with many bitter and painful experiences. First had come the long ride northward in the box car, which, though not pleasant, Beauty endured with a wonderfully good grace, for old black Jess had accompanied him, and the familiar face helped him forget the jolts and jars of the journey. Moreover, he regarded all the world as his friend, as he manifested repeatedly by his friendly overtures to all

A BLUE GRASS BEAUTY

who came near him, till, by the time the journey ended, there was not a man or boy on the train who did not stop to speak to him, or stroke him, or bring him some tidbit. Beauty always welcomed them like the thoroughbred gentleman he was, and made them feel that *they* were the favored ones. Never having experienced the least unkindness, he did not apprehend it, and his soft little neigh of welcome to those approaching him won all hearts.

In due time the great city was reached, and Beauty had much to learn and much to reason out in his own horse mind. His home was to be far up-town on Riverside Drive, and Jess rode him to his new master's address. Eighth Avenue with its continuous traffic, its clanging trolley cars and its mingled noises excited his curiosity; and time and again he would stop short, raise his head, and draw in long, audible breaths, as though trying to smell something familiar, while his great, eloquent eyes flashed from one strange object to another.

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Jess let him have his own way, talking to him meanwhile as though he were one of the numerous small Jesses at home. "Lor, Honey, is yer cravin' ter put on city style right off? A-standin' up here an' a-snuffin' an' a-smellin' like yer was a-tryin' fer ter take in de city airs froo yer nose," and Jess chuckled at his own joke. "Now, don't yer bat yer big eyes at dem cyars, case dey ain't agoin' ter jump der tracks fer *no* colt, don't make no diff'ence *how* much quality-folks he is. So come right long, Honey, and fust ting yer knows yer 'll be de grandee ob de stable up yander."

And so it went, till Beauty was safely delivered at his future master's stable. Then came the trial drive, in which Beauty learned that city horses wore a very different sort of harness from the one he had been accustomed to, and even though the beautiful head was naturally held at a noble angle, a check rein kept it there for hours, no matter what the grade of road, or what laws governed his motions under certain conditions.

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The tender, sensitive mouth, which had never known or needed anything heavier than a bar bit, found the heavy curb hard to endure, yet Beauty endured with a wonderful good grace, accepting the whole thing as a sort of mistake on the groom's part, which, doubtless, he would remedy when he learned that such precautions were unnecessary. The long, sweeping tail was knotted up—why Beauty could not understand, for it was not muddy, and he had never had his tail tied up unless the roads at home were soft.

Poor Beauty, he had yet to learn that man knows a thing or two more than the Lord who created him, and that dumb beasts must be educated to that point too, if possible.

We must pass by those three years, in which Beauty's education advanced rapidly, for from the very moment Jess left him, to the present date, Beauty's horse mind had to grasp many startling facts, and it is difficult to recognize in the present Beauty the animal which Jess rode up Eighth Avenue almost three years ago. The

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soft, silky mane is reduced to a mere bristly brush, running along his neck, the forelock has disappeared completely, and, alas, for the tail, it will never again wave like a triumphant banner, emphasizing Beauty's joy at being in a world so sweet.

But in the eyes and ears lay the most pathetic story, the softness, the gentleness, the love which beamed from them upon mankind has given place to a nervous, questioning apprehension, while the delicate ears which formerly always pointed so gracefully forward, now, move rapidly back and forth, or are held alertly erect, striving to grasp by sound what the eyes are unable to see owing to the close blinders; ears that betrayed to the initiated that the horse has learned rather to dread the driver's voice than to welcome it, and to understand that the word is often replaced by the hissing of the whip, as the most approved manner of "starting off with eclat," and he has grown to expect the sudden stinging lash across his flanks which sets every nerve a-quiver.

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But what of that? He is only a horse, and can never proclaim to the world that, each day and each hour of his life, he is a martyr to the inexorable decrees of Dame Fashion.

Twice during the three years he had carried off the Blue Ribbon at the great show held in Madison Square Garden, and fabulous sums of money had been offered for him. But his master had not yet tired of him.

It was November and the week of the year for society and horses. All that was beautiful, graceful and perfect was gathered beneath that vast roof. This year Beauty was not to be entered, for a slight mishap had disqualified him. It might easily have been avoided, and that fact did not add to the peace of mind of either his owner, or the owner's coachman, whose fault it was. Everything had been shaping well till a few days before the entries were to be made, and Mr. Titus was already congratulating himself upon the prospective

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landing of Blue Ribbon number three, when all his anticipations were shattered.

There were several horses beside Beauty in Mr. Titus' stable, and according to generally conceived ideas regarding such animals, they were well treated. That is, they had a fine stable, clean and well ventilated; their harness was the handsomest and finest that could be procured; they were fed the best food and fed regularly. Dempsey, the coachman, and Murray, the groom, were, upon the whole, reliable men.

If the horses did not know the meaning of a soft, gentle word now and again; if sudden stinging slaps were administered by muscular hands at the slightest motion while they were being groomed, or at their failure instantly to respond to the command to "get over there," when their stalls were entered; if their blinders were drawn in so tightly by the crown strap that they rested against the delicate eyes and caused the most painful irritation; or if the check-reins kept their heads so drawn

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back that breathing became distressing, what of that? It all came in the regular course of things.

“Pettin’ don’t do fer hosses. It only spiles ’em, an’ ye can’t git no style out of a hoss what ’s fussed over,” was a sage remark once made by a coachman whose horses were never guilty of turning their heads either to right or left while *he* had them in hand.

Beauty’s mishap was the very natural outcome of this condition of things, for one evening when Dempsey was just entering his stall with a heavy bucket of water, Beauty utterly forgot himself in his eagerness for the coming drink, and turning his head around nickered as he used to do long ago at home when old black Jess brought him his drink and stood beside him stroking the silky mane, and assuring him that “there wa n’t ner anudder like him on dis yearth.”

As Dempsey came into the stall Beauty’s nose hit the bucket, and some of the water was spilled. Dempsey jerked backward

and uttered a sharp reproof, which he accompanied with the ever-ready slap. Beauty plunged sideways, the bucket dropped from Dempsey's hand, and rolled beneath Beauty's feet, water and all. Another wild plunge and Beauty's chances at the Horse Show were gone, for a thin streak of blood down his off leg told that the bucket handle was held in place by heavy iron plates.

It was not a very deep cut, after all, but quite deep enough to lame him for several days, and to leave a scar for many more. A scar and the Horse Show drawing near! Mr. Titus was informed that "Somehow the hoss had managed to calk himself in the night," and was left to wonder how he could possibly do it without calks on his shoes.

But even though Beauty was now beyond the pale of respectability, so far as the great ring was concerned, he could still stand at the gates of paradise, so to speak, there to deposit his master and his elegantly attired mistress. No hand-

somer equipage came up to that door than Mr. Titus', for the cut leg had entirely healed, and only a slight stiffness betrayed that it had ever been hurt at all. Many were the admiring glances cast upon the beautiful bay horse, and none more appreciative than those of a dark-haired girl about twenty-one years of age, who visited the Horse Show each day.

Again and again, as she was about to enter the Garden, she would pause in the foyer and wait a little in order to see the bay horse which always came at about the same hour. She was accompanied by an elderly gentleman and one a few years her senior, and all three bore the air of knowing a fine horse when they saw one, as well as a certain untrammelled freedom of manner as though they were accustomed to a large breathing space, and were very sufficient unto themselves. Without the slightest sign of boldness or self-consciousness, the girl still possessed a remarkable self-poise and freedom of speech and manner, and her comments upon the animals

she saw caused more than one old horseman to glance at her in surprise.

It was the closing day of the show, and the preceding ones had been fraught with many startling revelations for humanitarians of the present day and age, and not a few outsiders had asked whether or not we were returning to the dark ages, for startling discoveries had been made, and much had been learned regarding "ways that are dark" and "tricks which are"—well, let us substitute the word fiendish for "vain." Horses had been driven to the Garden harnessed in every conceivable and inconceivable manner, all intended to put "style" in them, never mind at what cost.

Upon this last day, Dempsey decided to outdo the outdone, and get Beauty up in a style that should carry all before it. Harness was accordingly polished as never before, and everything was in the most perfect order possible. Then came harnessing, and when Dempsey drove up to his master's door, and Mr. Titus came out to take

a final inspection before assisting his wife into the victoria, he marveled greatly at the still more pronounced "action" of his handsome horse. The feet were pawing, the head tossed up and down as though the impatient animal were so full of life that he simply could not await the start, yet when the head was moved slightly sideways, a quick, nervous plunge would be made, very much as one would start at a sudden, keen pin-prick.

The Garden was reached, and Beauty fell in line behind a long string of carriages which were depositing their occupants. The line was unusually long, for there seemed to be much more delay than usual. At last Beauty stood five from the entrance; Dempsey began to get his eyes open, and his usually florid cheeks took on a lighter shade. With a muttered expletive, he gave Beauty a keen lash with the whip, and drew sharply upon the left rein to turn him out of the line. His master made a quick protest, and partly arose from the seat.

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But it was too late. Dear, patient, handsome Beauty's nerves had called a halt, and a second later he had given one wild despairing leap up into the air, then plunged forward, and curbs, burrs, checks, and whips were forgotten in the desperate dash for freedom.

BACK IN GOD'S COUNTRY



CHAPTER III

BACK IN GOD'S COUNTRY

IT was all over in a moment! The wheel collided with one much heavier and stronger; the axle snapped; Mr. and Mrs. Titus were thrown upon the pavement, and more or less bruised, while a block farther up the avenue several strong hands were striving to subdue the now half-maddened horse, which, with one final plunge, had slipped upon the wet asphalt and there lay prone, quivering in every nerve.

Dempsey had been pitched headforemost over the dashboard at the very outset, for his nerves had already received one shock, and he lost his head completely. Murray hurried to the assistance of his master and mistress, and Beauty was left to the mercy of strangers.

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Some one was removing his headstall when a fine-looking young man stepped up, and asked: "Can't I help a bit here?" and a second later Beauty stood upon his feet again. "By Jove, he ^{is} a beauty; is n't he?" said the man, as he helped to set things straight, and as he spoke the last word, the horse turned his head quickly and gave a soft little whinny, then started as though fearing a rebuke. But the man, going quickly to the horse's head, put his hand in his coat pocket and asked: "Sugar, Beauty? Have some sugar?" and he almost laughed aloud in his delight when the horse, taking a step or two toward him, nipped and pulled gently at his buttons. "Beauty, by all that is wonderful!" exclaimed the man, as he caressed the horse, which crowded up to him as though he had found a safe haven from his tormentors.

"How 's that for torture?" asked the man, holding up the lately removed headstall to show within the leather rings upon each side of the bit a rampant array of tiny sharp spikes. As he

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drew near with the headstall the horse gave a nervous plunge, but was instantly checked by a word from the other man beside him. "There, there, Beauty, old fellow! Quiet down a bit. Quiet down a bit," he said soothingly, and the horse at once ceased his frightened plunging. "You seem to know him," said the officer. "Who owns him; do you know?"

"I can't tell you who owns him now, but I have known this horse ever since he first piped his eye upon the world, have n't I, Beauty? I 'd know him and all his little tricks among a thousand. So would Bess; would n't she, Beauty? Wish she could see you now. George, how those eyes would snap at the sight of that thing yonder," and he nodded toward the headstall. As though his words had summoned her, Bess stood upon the curbstone and gave a little cry of astonishment.

"Oh, Bert! I knew it, I knew it! It is Beauty, is n't it. I knew I could not be mistaken, though they have nearly deprived him of

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his beauty. Beauty, Beauty, don't you remember me?" she cried, as Bert Conant led him up to the curbstone, where she stood with both hands outstretched, as she would have held them out to a child. No child ever responded more promptly than did Beauty, and in an instant all trials were forgotten.

Mr. Titus, having given his wife over to the care of sympathetic friends, who were now condoling with her on the accident caused by "that vicious horse," and urging her to "dispose of him without an instant's delay," now appeared upon the scene with Murray, to claim their ar-rant animal.

"I paid six hundred dollars for that beast less than three years ago, but I 'd take two this minute, if anyone was fool enough to offer it. He 'll never be worth a cent to me again, for my wife vows that nothing will induce her to drive behind him after this experience."

"I 'll take your offer, sir," promptly answered a voice at his elbow. "Will you have your

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check right now? Can't be too quick for me."

Mr. Titus turned sharply about to find himself confronted by a very determined looking young man, who held in his hands a check-book and a fountain pen, as though prepared to back up his assertion.

"And may I ask who you might be, young sir?" he asked in a tone which caused the blood of the old Conants to rise up in defiance, as Bert replied: "Well, I *might* be the Shah of Persia, but I *am* Mr. Herbert Colfax Conant, at your service, sir. Permit me to offer you my card," and he handed it to Mr. Titus.

The older man smiled in spite of himself at the answer so promptly given, and taking a card from his own pocket-book, handed it to Bert with the words: "Call at my office on Monday at eleven, and we will settle this matter;" then turning to his groom he ordered him to take the horse back home at once. After some further delay Mr. Titus rejoined his wife, and was presently lost to sight in the throng. Not so four

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others, with whom we will finish this story.

“Do you think he will accept your offer?” said Bess as she clasped both hands upon Bert’s arm in her eagerness, just as the old Bess would have done three years ago.

“I ’ll *make* him,” was the wild assertion, for Bert was not wholly accountable for what he was saying at that moment. It was nearly two years since he had seen Bess; for, shortly after Beauty came North, Bert had come also, to accept a position with a prominent law firm. They had been years of rapid advancement and great success for him, and the dream, or part of it, had been realized, for the old home presented a very different appearance, and his father took infinite pride, when he displayed some little luxury to his friends, in saying, “My son insists upon presenting all these little comforts to me. I ’m proud of him, sir! Very proud of him. He will make his mark in the world, sir.”

Still, the old dream-picture lacked one thing to make it perfect.

A BLUE GRASS BEAUTY

“How did you know him?” demanded Fred, as he slipped his hand through Bert’s unhampered arm, and walked beside his old friend. “Bess has been watching that identical horse for the entire week, and insisting that it was old Beauty in spite of all father and I could say to the contrary, for we never would have recognized him, docked and trimmed up in that fashion. It is a perfect shame to mutilate a horse like that.”

“Bess never forgets old friends; do you, daughter?” said Mr. Corbin as he took his place beside her and gave her a light pat upon the shoulder, while he glanced quickly at Bert, who saw the glance and colored slightly.

But Bess was too absorbed in the subject of Beauty’s trials to give a thought to other matters; and as she still clasped her hands about Bert’s arm, she asked:

“Will you *really* buy him, Bert? Can you now? Won’t the price be dreadfully high?”

“What will you give me if I buy him and

A BLUE GRASS BEAUTY

send him down to the farm for you to take care of till I come down on my vacation next summer? I have n't had a vacation in two years, and my next one is going to last at least a month," said Bert, looking down upon the bonny, earnest face beside him.

"Oh, I 'll give you *anything* in the world you want! The very nicest thing I *have*, if you will only send him safe home," cried Bess.

"Good! He 'll come. I 'll buy him now if I go broke for six months. Then I 'll come down and keep you to your word," and Bert laughed his very happiest laugh; but Bess looked slightly troubled as she asked: "Truly, Bert, can you afford it? Don't laugh, I 'm in earnest now, and please don't think I 'm inquisitive. We have been friends so long, you know."

"And we 're going to be lots longer if I have anything to say about it. Don't worry your little heart, and I shan't go on my uppers just yet. Ross and Beemis seem to think I 'm worth quite a tidy sum to them; they have just told me they

A BLUE GRASS BEAUTY

are afraid I can't keep the wolf from my door on my present salary, so they are going to throw in four hundred more next year. That will be more than enough to buy Beauty back; don't you believe it will?" They had reached their box in the Garden by this time, and presently all were absorbed in watching the handsome horses in the ring.

June with all her beauty and bloom was making the world anew, and in no part of it had she been busier than in the great "Blue Grass" region. There her lavishness was rewarded four-fold, and wood and field testified to her handiwork. Birds sang among the trees and shrubs as though they would never cease singing, and a perfect ecstasy of melody filled the air. Nor were they the only warblers in the woods that lovely June morning.

Coming down the pretty wood-road, with her riding-cap resting upon her lap, and the sunshine flickering through the leaves upon her pretty hair which her ride had somewhat loos-

A BLUE GRASS BEAUTY

ened from its pins and combs—one hand holding her reins loosely, while the other stroked the silky neck of Beauty—rode Bess, singing at the top of her voice for very gladness. Beauty stepped sedately along, choosing the softest spots to place his feet, as though his beloved burden must not receive the slightest jar.

Presently he turned his head partly around as though to catch a glimpse of the singer, but immediately gave a slight start as though he expected the whip she carried to fall upon him. “Oh, Beauty, *why* do you do so?” cried Bess, as she abruptly ceased singing, and leaning forward clasped her arms about his warm, soft neck. “Don’t you *know* that *Bess* won’t punish you? What *did* they do to you up North, that you are so frightened all the time? I wonder if the old confidence will ever return. There now, don’t be frightened again, and turn around just as often as you like. I ’m singing to *you*, and you must show your appreciation.” A merry little laugh bubbled to her lips; so near her lips lie a young girl’s heart.



A Blue Grass Beauty.

"'YOU WANT ME, BERT?'"

A BLUE GRASS BEAUTY

Then the happy old Beauty seemed to come back, and with a soft whinny he broke into a joyous canter, tossed his head as of old, and tried to wave his docked tail. As they swung along in the varying sunlight and shadow of the woods, the thud, thud of a rapidly approaching horse sounded upon the ground. Bess turned to look over her shoulder, and Bert Conant emerged from the trees, riding Fred's pet horse. He waved his hat and called: "Free for six weeks, Bess, and I've come straight down to claim my reward!" Then, as he drew up close beside her, and Beauty and Bonny Lass rubbed noses together, he added more seriously, and his voice quivered slightly: "You promised to give me the very best thing in the world if I chose to claim it, Bess, and now I am going to do so, dear. I have waited a long time, yet never dared to ask for it before. But the old dream can never be perfect till I have *you*, little girl."

Bess had looked at him incredulously as he poured out the words, and then her big eyes

opened wide as she asked: "You want *me*, Bert? Just *me*!" as though it were hard to realize that the old boy and girl friendship had given place to a man's deep love for a woman.

"‘Just me,’ dear. In one respect not such a tremendous thing to claim, but in another the greatest you can give me. Can you give it, my little girl?" Bert's face was very earnest as he spoke, and leaning across he placed his hand upon the gloved one which but a few minutes before had been caressing Beauty.

Bess did not speak for a moment, but looked off through the fairy-like woods as though trying to read her answer in its sylvan depths; then turning a pink cheek toward the man regarding her so closely she answered, as she looked up at him from under her little elf locks blowing all about her face: "I never break my word, Bert."

WHIZZER, WHIRLIGIG AND
BUSTER

WHIZZER, WHIRLIGIG AND BUSTER

“’**T**ENTION! Pwesent Arms! ’Tention! Wight face! Forward March!” cried a childish voice from the opposite side of the tall hedge.

“What sort of orders is them?” questioned a surly voice, and its owner parted the thick branches of the hedge to peer through it at what was taking place within the grounds which the hedge divided from the dusty roadway.

A curious sight met the man’s gaze, for in the very center of the velvety lawn, with its patches of sunlight and shade, stood a fairy-like little figure of about six summers, daintily arrayed in a white frock, with a broad sash of red, white and blue draped from her shoulder and fastened in a large bow under her left arm, a “Liberty” cap made of a small silk flag was stuck upon her

head, and in one hand she grasped a small sword, while with the other she waved the American flag.

In front of her, gayly decked with small flags, stood a monstrous St. Bernard dog, regarding her with its beautiful, intelligent eyes. With every change of tone or attitude, his ears were raised, or lowered, and his head turned a little to one side. Neither was aware of the third pair of eyes at the hedge, for it was some distance from where the pair stood, and they were much occupied with their own concerns.

Presently the order was repeated in a more peremptory tone, and the great dog arose to his hind feet, waved his front ones wildly in the air once or twice, and then took a few clumsy steps forward, as the child retreated backward, waving her flag and flourishing her sword.

Then down he came, to have his small captain rush upon him and embrace him rapturously, and assure him that he was "just the very bestest dog that ever lived!" Then the drill

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proceeded, and the dog was put through all manner of evolutions, meantime being assured that it "would vewry soon be the Fourth of July," and that "Uncle Fwed would come to spend it with them," and "How 'shamed you 'd be if you did n't know how to 'bey orders when Uncle Fwed gave 'em."

In the midst of the drilling a gentleman came out upon the porch, and called: "Come along, little patriot! The carriage will be here in a few minutes, and you 'll want an every-day hat on instead of your liberty cap." With a parting hug for her companion, the child tossed down her sword and flag, and skipping across the lawn, ran up to the piazza steps and vanished within the house with "Daddy," whom she assured that "she could n't live a single day without 'Buster.' "

Nothing had escaped either the eyes or ears upon the outer side of the hedge, and barely had the beautiful little figure vanished than its human antithesis withdrew his gaze, muttered

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something beneath his breath, and lurched off down the road a little way. Flinging himself upon the soft grass at the roadside, he watched the entrance gate of the big house, and presently saw a carriage drive from it, then a wicked light came into his eyes, and turning into the fields, he made his way to the rear of the building.

It was perhaps four hours later when this same figure was making its way swiftly along an unfrequented wood road which led toward the river, leading a big dog by a piece of rope. Over the animal's head was tied a piece of bagging, which every few minutes he tried to shake off, but it was too firmly tied about his neck.

The railway track ran close to the river bank, and standing upon a side track were several box cars. The man looked sharply in every direction, but no sign of living thing was to be seen. Then he scrambled down the bank, pushed open the door of one of the empty cars, managed to get the dog into the car and follow it quickly himself. Then he drew the door

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together and ended the first act of the story.

At midnight a freight train drew up to the siding, the empty cars were attached to it, and the brakeman shouted "all right," and away rolled the cars, the man and the dog.

The dawn was breaking over the town of Greenwold, when the train slowed up, and the empty cars were cut loose to go rolling into the freight yard on a flying switch. Presently they came to a standstill, and when all was quiet again the man slipped from the car, dragging the dog after him.

As he removed the bagging from the animal's head he was threatened with a low growl and it seemed as though the dog meant to fly at him, but a brutal blow upon his head very nearly stunned him into submission. Then they made their way into the town proper, where the handsome dog attracted much attention. Putting on a brave front, the man made his way to a saloon, and ere long was regaling himself upon what it had to offer. But he paid no heed to

the dog's needs, although that intelligent creature did everything but speak his hunger.

About an hour had passed, when the man emerged from the saloon, and made his way unsteadily down the street, leading the dog with him. He had tried to induce the saloon-keeper to buy the dog, but could not strike a bargain with him. As the pair disappeared down the road the saloon-keeper remarked to some of his customers:

“He never came by that beast honest. That dog 's worth a tidy sum.”

Several days passed, and the great and glorious day of our land drew near. In all the shops of Greenwold flags and fireworks were displayed, and the boys were saving every penny they could beg or earn for the purchase of fire-crackers.

Greenwold was a quiet little town, but its citizens, both old and young, were very patriotic; especially the latter. But Greenwold was also very conservative in its ideas regarding educa-

tion and the institutions connected therewith, and had no intention of closing its schoolroom doors a moment earlier than seemed absolutely necessary.

So the rising generation of Greenwold fumed and fidgeted at its tasks, took surreptitious peeps out of the school-room windows when it should have been absorbed in nine-times-five, wondered if Mr. Brown, who kept a general store just over the way, had got anything new since the doors had closed upon them at nine o'clock, and hated school and all pertaining to it when they had to stay shut up within its walls the day before the Fourth. True, it was the last day, and to-morrow would begin a long vacation, but why could n't it have begun sooner?

However, everything must end, and when three strokes were tolled off on the town clock, a howling, shouting mass burst from the school-house doors, and, like shot from a blunderbuss, scattered in every direction.

“Come on, Whizzer! I 'll beat yer to

Brown's. Bet he 's got them sky-rockets he said he was a-goin' ter have!" cried a black-eyed little chap, stopping in his onward rush to whirl around on his heel, and yell at a taller boy who was struggling to get his books strapped together.

"Ah, hold on a minute! Brown's aint a-goin' ter get away, and I can't get this strap fastened. There!" and with a final tug at the books, "That 's the last of *you* for one while, I bet a cent!" and the books were tossed over his shoulder, where they hung dangling by the strap as their owner tore across the school green and joined his friend just as he stopped to read a notice which had been fastened to a tree in front of Brown's store while he and Whirligig were confined within the school house.

"What is it?" demanded Whirligig, peering over his friend's shoulder.

"Dog lost. Must a been a dandy if they 'll pay all that for him. Gee! Twenty-five dollar 's a lot of money, ain 't it? Don't you wish *we*

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could find him? We 'd go snacks, would n't we, and, say, maybe we would n't have a show to-morrow!"

"Was he lost here? Whose dog is it?"

"No; way down in York State! What do they think he 'd be doin' up in Connecticut, do you 'spose?"

"Come up in a parlor car, maybe, if he 's such a big gun. They did n't give him a very handsome name, though, did they? 'Buster!' That ain't no great shakes of a name is it?" said Whirligig, spinning around upon his heel as was his habit when excited, and which habit had won for him his odd nickname.

The boys then made their way into Mr. Brown's store and were presently so absorbed in examining his display of fire works, forming conjectures as to their cost and possibilities, and how far their small savings would go toward purchasing a supply for the morrow, that the dog advertised dropped entirely from their thoughts, although under ordinary circum-

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stances it would have remained a topic of conversation for some time. Their joint savings amounted to exactly sixty-five cents, and when this sum had been judiciously invested, and the parcel wrapped up they were ready to depart.

“Look-a-here, you boys have been pretty good customers, and I guess I kin stand treat. Fourth of July and vacation don’t come every day. What do you say to some crackers and cheese by way of a blow out?” asked Mr. Brown.

“Guess we aint sayin’ nothin’ sassy,” answered Whirligig with a genial grin.

“Need ’n ter let it go ter waste fer want of somebody ter eat it, I guess,” was Whizzer’s comment.

“Well, here; take this and go long, an’ let me wait on someone else,” and he thrust into the boy’s hands a paper bag containing some crackers and a generous piece of cheese. Whizzer grabbed it and shot through the door. Whirligig spun around on his lively heel to bring his face toward their benefactor, and cried:

“Thank you ever so much! That ’s just hunky!”

“Do you ’spose we can get ’em ter do it?” asked Whizzer with his mouth full of crackers and cheese.

“We ’ll just *make* ’em. It ’s just as easy as anything. Dick was a-showin’ me last night, and he told me the orders too. It ’s just like this. Stand up in front of me an’ do just as I do, and you ’ll learn in no time. Then I ’ll make you my Lieutenant, and we ’ll make a dandy show,” and laying down the hunk of cheese and crackers he was holding, Whirligig spun around and assumed a soldierly attitude.

The boys had made their way to a little dell, just out of the village, and seating themselves upon an old log which lay beside the mill dam, had regaled themselves upon Mr. Brown’s treat. Very little of it remained, and this was carefully placed upon the log for future consideration, but just now Whirligig was keenly alive to the latest plan for the morrow, and this was a parade of

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the boys to follow the village company to the lake about a mile beyond the village, where patriotic speeches, a spread and later fire-works, were to celebrate the day and evening. Whirligig's big brother was Captain of the company, and had stirred Whirligig's enthusiasm to fever heat.

“Attention! Present arms! Attention! Right face! Forward, March!” he cried, using a piece of stick for a sword, and imitated closely by Whizzer. They had been hard at it for ten minutes or more, and so absorbed that they had failed to notice a forlorn dog which had slunk in behind the bushes and was snuffing eagerly at the parcel upon the log, and eying them closely meanwhile.

He was a wretched enough looking creature, for his feet were sore from tramping, his hair in a dirty mat, and a gnawed and dragged piece of rope tied about his neck testified to the manner of his escape. Lying almost flat upon his stomach he crawled closer and closer to the

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paper bag, and was on the point of seizing it when Whirligig issued a somewhat more peremptory order than had yet been given. Whizzer braced himself to obey, when chancing to turn his eyes a little to the left, he nearly fell flat with amazement, for just a little behind Whirligig stood a huge dog straight upon his hind legs, his front paws wildly fanning the air, but marching like a soldier, and as the unconscious Captain issued his orders, the dog changed his tactics to respond to them, going through with perfect precision, the evolutions which poor Whizzer was striving so hard to learn.

‘Oh, Jerusalem Christmas! Look a-there! Look A-THERE!’ he yelled, dropping his sword, and staring with open mouth.

“Where? What?” demanded Whirligig, his educated heel standing him in good stead as he whirled about. The dog had come down upon all fours, and stood regarding the boys with a half frightened, half beseeching expression.

“He was a-doin’ the very things you were

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tellin' me to do. He was right up on his hind feet, walking for all he was worth," almost yelled Whizzer.

Whirligig looked incredulous, but put out his hand to the dog and said: "Come here. Come here. Good dog. Good dog," and was promptly responded to by the sagacious beast, which raised the dejected tail and wagging it graciously, laid his head in the boy's outstretched hands and looked at him appealingly. Then glancing toward the log, he gave a low bark.

"He 's hungry! He 's begging for something to eat!" cried Whizzer. "That 's the reason he was doing those things, I bet a dollar," and he caught up the bag. The dog gave every evidence of joy, and the boys began feeding him the cheese and crackers which he devoured ravenously.

"See if he will march again for something to eat," exclaimed Whizzer, and a moment later the dog was performing the "drill" like an old soldier, for each evolution receiving a reward

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from the paper bag. No thought of connecting the appearance of this remarkable dog with the advertisement upon the village tree ever entered their heads.

After they had fully tested his remarkable prowess, they rushed toward the village leading him with them, and before nightfall their company was formed, with "Jack," as they had named the dog, for its chief officer. Then arose the question of ownership, which was amicably settled by a partnership, the boys agreeing that Whizzer should keep him one week and Whirligig the next, parents, guardians, etc., permitting, and Whizzer led him home in triumph.

Drums were beating, the band playing, flags waving, fire-crackers banging and a general hoorah prevailing in Greenwold. Everybody who had "a team," was out upon the highway, and everybody who had n't one was riding "Shank's mare," and sending her along toward the little park in the outskirts of the town as fast as she would carry them.

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The last small boy the town produced was trudging along at the tail end of the procession, for at that end was the most important actor in the entire turnout. Military parades, brass bands, and flags were every-day affairs, but a big St. Bernard dog that could march as well as a soldier, and who knew the commands given, was a novelty not to be lightly regarded. Whizzer had done his best for his new found pet, and with Whirligig's assistance had scrubbed and scoured the dog until he bore but little resemblance to the forlorn creature which had begged for food the previous day.

A clean coat and a well filled stomach had heartened him up wonderfully, and now he was marching along surrounded by an admiring throng of children, waving his plummy tail, from which every vestige of a burr had been removed, and beaming upon his friends with love and gratitude in the beautiful eyes. Now and again a halt would be called, and Jack put through his drill for the benefit of all admirers. He never

failed to respond, and seemed delighted with the praise showered upon him.

The procession had reached the park, and "speechifying" had begun when an automobile came rapidly into the village from the opposite direction. In it were seated a gentleman, a lady and a little girl, who looked eagerly all about her and talked incessantly. The vehicle drew up in front of the Constable's office and the gentleman hurried in. A few moments later he reappeared followed by that officer, who took his place upon the rear seat, and a second later was whirling down the road in the direction taken by the parade.

The speeches were ended, and the event of the day was about to take place. This was the firing of the big cannon which had not been fired since the civil war. Many were very skeptical regarding it, and contended that it was a dangerous undertaking, but they were over-ruled by the more enthusiastic, and the old gun was charged with powder; "enough to have blown it

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to fragments when it was at its best," so said the wiseacres.

Just as the match was about to be applied an exciting scene was enacted not far from the cannon, for a coarse looking man pushed his way through the crowd to where Whizzer and Whirligig were standing, the latter holding Jack's leader, lest he grow excited and take French leave. Pushing the children roughly aside, the man laid hold of the dog's chain, jerked it savagely from the boy's hands and started to drag the dog away. But he was instantly surrounded by a protesting throng of children, and fierce growls from the dog plainly told his resentment of such treatment.

Just as the recrimination was at its fiercest the match was applied to the cannon, and a second later, destruction was sown broadcast, for the old gun had long since been hors de combat, and with one wild boom gave up the fight forever. Many were thrown flat, several were badly injured, and one man was seen to whirl

bodily into the pond at which the cannon pointed.

When people managed to collect their senses the man was struggling in the water, but evidently helpless. A general rush was made for the shore, and someone ran to unfasten a boat which was moored a little way off. But the man must have perished before it could reach him, but for a splendid dog which rushed to his rescue. Plunging into the water he caught the man by his coat collar and began to swim toward shore with him, the crowd cheering and yelling like mad, and two small boys dancing and whirling about like wild Indians. Never had Whirligig's heel been called upon to meet such demands. Willing hands rushed to the noble dog's assistance, and Whizzer and Whirligig fell upon him bodily, regardless of the shower-bath with which they were greeted.

Just at this moment an automobile came whirling into the park, and the next second a beautiful little child was hugging and crying

over the dripping dog, calling him her "dear, dear Buster," while he in turn acted like a crazy thing, licking her hands, and whining with joy.

"He 's the twenty-five dollar dog! He 's the twenty-five dollar dog!" shouted Whizzer. "She calls him 'Buster,' and that was the name on the notice! We found him! We found him!"

"I 'd rather have him than the money, even if they 'll give it to us," said Whirligig in a doleful tone. "He aint no slouch of a dog, let me tell you. I 'd rather have the dog."

"I 'll take charge of this man," said the Constable, laying his hand upon the arm of the man whom the dog had rescued, and who was now sufficiently recovered to sit up and see what was taking place. "You got a good bit more than you deserved when that dog saved you from drowning, my man. The world can spare such as you."

Meantime Mr. Howard had been making inquiries upon his own account, and going up to the two boys he said:

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“So these are the boys who rescued and befriended Buster? Come along with Flossy and me. We think that we can do something for the boys who did so much for our dog. A ride in the automobile won’t be a bad beginning. Ever had a ride in one?”

Before the boys well knew what had happened they were whirling over the ground with Buster capering along beside them, a lady smiling upon them from the front seat, a bonny little girl telling them all about her dear Buster and how he had been stolen, and a gentleman nodding approval of all the little maid said.

That evening, long after the automobile had spun away out of the town, two very happy boys settled themselves down to talk over the exciting events of the day.

“He gave me a whole dollar just for fireworks,” said Whizzer.

“Yes, and me too,” cried Whirligig. “And he told Pa that he had left a cheque with the constable for each of us, ’cause we both found the

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dog. And nobody is to touch it, and it has got to stay in the bank till we 're big, and then it 'll be a lot more, cause Pa said that it would draw interest, and when we were men we would have some money to begin business with. My, think of that! Ain't we rich? We 've both got a quarter of a hundred dollars!"

TINY TIM'S EASTER GIFT

TINY TIM'S EASTER GIFT

“**N**OW where has that blockhead gone to, I 'd like to know! Seems to me he need n't take half a day to deliver a bundle of kindling, seven pounds of sugar and a box of baking powder,” and the proprietor of the big grocery store on Fenton Street popped his head out of his store door to look for the tardy clerk whom he had sent to deliver some goods more than an hour before. As he opened the door he saw a wee bit of a laddie standing in front of a great tray of eggs labeled:

“Strictly fresh eggs, just from Long Island. Ten for a quarter!”

It was a tiny figure, shabbily clad, and thin almost to emaciation, but the face was a frank one and evidently deeply interested in the pile of eggs.

TINY TIM'S EASTER GIFT

"Seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, te-wen-t-y," murmured the lips, and then an interruption came from the store door.

"Hey, sonny! What are you doing to them eggs?"

"I ain't doin' nothin' but just countin' 'em."

"Countin' 'em?" echoed the groceryman with a laugh. "Expect to stand there till to-morrow mornin'?"

"Nop, but I ain't hurtin' 'em, and they look so nice and white."

"Like eggs?"

"Bet I does, but I can't git none now; cost too much."

"Can you do an errand?"

"Guess I kin. Whatcher want?"

"Here; take this loaf of bread and scoot along up to ——— Street, and then come back and I 'll give you two of the finest eggs in that pile."

"Will yer fer honest?" asked that boy, his face growing wonderfully attractive when

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lighted up by a smile, for the eyes were as blue as the March skies overhead, and the cheeks would have had a suggestion of June's roses had Dear Mother Nature's plans not been thwarted, but there was not enough of the rich, lifeblood in that small frame to spare any for decorative purposes. It was all needed to keep body and soul together.

"Sure! My best customer is waiting for that loaf to stuff her poultry for dinner, and that lunkhead of a boy of mine aint shown up since noon."

The wee laddie took the big loaf, nearly as tall as himself, and tucking it under his arm, scurried across the street. The grocer watched him until he turned the corner, and then muttering:

"Guess he 'll go all right enough," gave a little laugh and returned to his store to attend to his other customers, for it was Saturday afternoon, and a busy season for him. In less time than it seemed possible the little messenger re-

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turned, and slipping into the store, was nearly lost sight of behind a big flour barrel. The proprietor had meantime forgotten his very existence. The afternoon slipped along, and sunset drew near. Then the store grew dim and the electric lights were turned on to reveal a small boy sitting on a box beside a flour barrel.

“Hello!” cried the proprietor, “When did you come back?”

“I came right back.”

“What! You aint been sittin’ there all this time?”

“Course I have. Did n’t you tell me ter come back fer my eggs?” with some shade of reproach in his voice.

“Well, why did n’t you come and ask fer ’em?”

“Cause you was a waitin’ on folks.”

“And you’ve been squattin’ down side that barrel all this time? Well you do beat my time. What ’s yer name?”

“Timothy Rollins.”

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“Tiny Tim?” asked the grocer, for he had come from Old England, and Dickens was an old friend.

“‘Aint never been called that. Will yer give me my eggs now?’”

“Sure! Come on, and I ’ll give you more ’n I said I would. Soon be Easter, and eggs will be gettin’ cheaper. Better take your feast while they ’re high priced and you ’re gettin’ a luxury,” and the man laughed as he led the way to the front of the store. “Now pick out four of the finest in that pile. Maybe if they had n’t come to market there would a-been four chicks come out of ’em at Easter. Who knows.”

The boy looked at him in a puzzled sort of way, and the man asked:

“What you lookin’ so queer about?”

“Say, what was that you said then? Chickens? Out of one ’er them eggs? Ah, a chicken could n’t git in one o’ them eggs.”

“Perhaps they could n’t get in, but they can come out all right. Did n’t ye never see a little chicken?”

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“A little chicken what was little enough ter git into a egg like that? Ah, say—”

“Don’t believe me, do you? Aint never been in the country have you? Well, take these eggs home, if you ’ve got a home. Give three of ’em to your mother, if you ’ve got one; have you?”

“Sure.”

“But this one I ’m goin’ to write your name on, and you roll it all up in this here bit o’ cotton,—see it?—an’ you just keep it right inside your shirt here. Don’t take it out night or day, an’ you see what ’ll happen three weeks from to-morrow,” and the man placed the egg inside the forlorn little shirt.

All this time the boy had been regarding him with a half doubtful, half trusting expression, with a wonderful hope creeping into his eyes, and when the egg was safely bestowed a queer little smile crept about the corners of his mouth.

“Did n’t expect to be turned into an incubator, did you sonny? Well, do n’t smash your

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egg, and there 's no knowing what will happen."

How little grown people are given to weighing the words they speak to little people, and yet what tremendous weight, for good or ill, for joy or sorrow those words often carry.

Poor little Timothy Rollins, poverty-stricken, half starved, wholly neglected, had then and there learned something that seemed a wild dream to him, nor could he have been said to have learned it either. As yet it was only a dim suspicion, for he did not know whether to believe what had been told him or not. But that egg was cherished.

The others were eaten with a keen relish, as would number four have been had its existence been suspected by the coarse, half-intoxicated woman whom this poor little soul called by that beautiful name—Mother.

Birds were singing, and bells were ringing upon Easter morning, telling to the world the glorious story of the Resurrection. Up in a

TINY TIM'S EASTER GIFT

wretched little room, barely more than a closet, but saved from utter dreariness by the warm Easter sunshine which flooded through one small window in the ceiling, sat Timothy Rollins, his little pinched face lighted up with a joy beyond words to express. He held in his claw-like little hands the wad of cotton given him by the grocer three weeks before and nestling in the center of it, with a bit of its shell still sticking to its feathers, was the weest of wee yellow chicks, looking up at Timothy with its tiny bead-like eyes and uttering the softest of peeps.

“An’ he said you lived in that egg an’ I did n’t b’live him. I did n’t, no, not fer a cent. But it was de trute, so it was. Ain’t you gist little! My, but what must yer eat!”

Here was a problem to confront. It was too much for Timothy, and wrapping his treasure carefully in the cotton, he put it into his hat, crept softly down the stairs, out into the glorious light of Easter day, carrying in his grimy

TINY TIM'S EASTER GIFT

little hands the beautiful symbol of Easter, but without even knowing that he was doing so. Straight to his friend, the grocer, he hurried, rushed into the store just as the clerks were hurrying out their early Sunday-morning orders, left over from the night before, and running up to the man cried:

“Look at me little hen! Look at me little hen what yer give me in de egg. It ’s gist come out, an’ aint it a dandy?”



LADDIE AND LASSIE

7—*Blue Grass Beauty.*

LADDIE AND LASSIE

“**A** BIG bay horse with the softest of white noses, thin, sensitive nostrils, whose quivering testified to the delicate nervous organization controlling them, or drew in long breaths of the clear spring air to exhale it in a contented sigh as though “thanking” the Lord for a life so sweet.”

Eyes that looked at you so squarely and honestly that you began to wonder if your conscience was as clear as their limpid depths; and such dainty pointed ears that you marvelled at their small size but wondrous ability to catch the faintest sound. There was nothing small about Laddie, in body or nature, excepting his ears and hoofs.

LADDIE AND LASSIE

We had bought him for a carriage horse, and the person from whom we got him assured me that he would prove "a first-class family horse, sound as a dollar, and the best disposition ever known." Still, we had heard similar assurances before, and experience had taught us that horse flesh needed salting.

Laddie was driven into our grounds one beautiful spring morning for my final decision regarding the purchase, and as he came prancing and curveting up the driveway I instantly fell in love with him.

Lassie (our pet name for our four-year-old daughter) and I were on the piazza, and hastened down to welcome the new arrival as the man who had him in charge drove up to the carriage block and, stepping from the surrey, stood beside it.

Lassie ran ahead of me, and, planting herself squarely in front of the big animal, stood with her sturdy legs far apart, her arms clasped behind her, and her head cocked knowingly upon

LADDIE AND LASSIE

one side, critically surveying him as he towered above her in all the grandeur of his fifteen hands two inches. How like satin his beautiful blood-bay coat shone in the sunshine, and how hard he tried to reach down to the little child standing so near him! But fashion, that inexorable dame, had put a tight check upon him and blinders at his eyes, and although he turned his head from side to side and jerked it up and down in his endeavors to reach her, it was only when the beautiful arched neck was turned far to one side that the head was brought any nearer the object he strove to reach.

Between big horse and little maid there was instantly established a mental telegraphy, and then happened something which instantly settled Laddie's fate.

"That *horwid* old check-rein! You can't weach me, can you? But *I'll* come where *I* can weach *you*," cried the child, and ere a word of remonstrance could be uttered she had run toward the horse and clasped both little arms

tightly about one slender front leg, and stood pressing her face close to it.

We stood breathless with astonishment, fearing to move or speak lest the great foot be stamped upon the tiny ones so close to it. But Laddie stood like a statue, and not a quiver stirred his massive frame.

“Step back, darling,” I said quietly to my little girl, “and I will undo his check so that you can stroke his face”—for any doubts I had entertained of Laddie had been dispelled forever. Utterly unconscious that she had been in a frightfully perilous situation, the child stepped back, and the man and I drew a breath of relief.

A second later, I had unhooked that invention of the evil one—the check-rein. First the great neck was stretched out as one would stretch one’s arms after having kept them for hours in a strained, unnatural position, and then the handsome head came down to the little arms waiting to “cuddle” it, and four-year-old

Laddie and four-year-old Lassie stood "making love" to each other. On one side perfect trust and confidence; on the other utter fearlessness and love.

After a thorough inspection, I said to the man:

"I am satisfied with all but the headstall, and I wish the blinders and check removed."

"Oh, but ye could n't dhrive him widout thim, ma'am! He was broke to 'em, and it would frighten the life out uv him to go widout thim. It 'd not be safe at all."

Patrick was a true child of Erin, and, having long been in the employ of a man who broke and trained all his colts with blinders and a high check, was convinced that Mr. Black's way was the only way.

"Let us try him without them, anyway, and if he misbehaves I shall have only myself to blame," I answered.

Side straps were soon brought from our stable and substituted for those then in the headstall,

and the check entirely discarded. I shall never forget how much handsomer Laddie looked, for his neck had a beautiful natural arch, and his great intelligent eyes, set so widely apart, seemed to see before, behind, and on all sides of him, as dear Mother Nature intended they should.

“Wait on the lawn for me, darling, until I have tried Laddie, and if he is a good horse you shall go for a drive,” I said, as I took my seat in the surrey, and the man seated himself beside me, doubtless with the double object of learning what sort of “whip” I should prove and how Laddie would deport himself under the new order of things.

Lassie skipped off to her nurse, who was waiting for her, and I gathered up the reins and prepared to start. The horse turned his head around to take a good look at me, and as I said kindly, “It ’s all right, old fellow, come along,” he gave it a toss and set off at a brisk pace.

I had driven many horses before, and have

LADDIE AND LASSIE

driven many since, but never hope to find Laddie's equal. An infant's hand could guide him, and while full of life and action he was gentle as a kitten. We went all about the town, and although we met many queer-looking objects, such as trolley cars, railway trains, etc., all well calculated to arouse doubts in any young horse, and even though Patrick still mentally questioned my wisdom in dispensing with the check and blinders, Laddie behaved like an "old stager," and came back to our home the very model of good behavior. This was the beginning of our fondness for him, which has steadily increased with each year, although eight have elapsed since that day.

Never again did he wear either blinders or a check-rein, and ere long a time came which caused us to be profoundly thankful that we drove him without them. Many a long, delightful drive did we take behind him, and very soon Lassie could drive him as easily as I could.

He knew the instant her small hands took the

LADDIE AND LASSIE

reins, and the change which at once manifested itself in gait and expression seemed to say as plainly as words could have done:

“Little missie is driving me now, and it behooves such a great strong creature as I am to show all that is best and gentlest in me, because she is ruling by love alone.”

As the years slipped by, Laddie became almost human in his fondness for us, and his natural intelligence developed beyond belief. He seemed to understand every word we said to him, and would follow us like a dog.

When Lassie was nine years old she drove him anywhere, and frequently went long errands over the mountain road to bring us eggs and cream cheese we always bought from a farm about three miles from our home.

One afternoon she started about three o'clock, and had not been absent half an hour when ominous “thunder heads” predicted a coming storm, which in a little while was raging furiously.

Confident that Lassie would remain at the

farm until the storm passed over, we felt little concern for her; but when the weather, instead of clearing, settled down to a dismal rain, we began to feel uneasy, even though we realized that she was an exceptionally "level-headed" little body who would take no chances.

Six o'clock came, and then seven, but that miserable down-pour continued. It was late in the summer, and the evenings were growing short, so that scarcely any daylight remained after seven o'clock; and when no Laddie or Lassie appeared by that hour, we began to feel considerable alarm, and sent Edward, our man, in quest of them. We had no other horse, so he was obliged to walk. He had gone nearly two miles, and was just beginning to climb up the steep mountain road where the thick foliage made it as dark as midnight, when he heard in the distance the slow, cautious tread of a horse, taking a few steps at a time; then halting; then taking a few more steps.

A sharp bend in the road winding zig-zag

down the mountain would have hidden the approaching vehicle had not the darkness effectually done so, and the man had ample time to marvel at such a remarkable manner of procedure. Hardly conscious why he did so, he called out:

“Who ’s coming there?” and was instantly answered by a shrill neigh and a joyful cry. Springing forward, he soon came upon Laddie and Lassie, and in the light of his lantern beheld a sight which nearly took his breath away.

Creeping cautiously down the steep dark road, with his nose so close to the ground as literally to *smell* his way, and with his big eyes wide open to see all that could be seen in the gloaming, with his left breeching strap dangling about his hind legs, and the carriage bumping against his haunches every step he took, came Laddie.

Kneeling in the bottom of the phaeton, with her arms stretched out over the dash-board, was Lassie, holding the reins and talking to the intelligent creature, who literally held her life in his keeping.

LADDIE AND LASSIE

It took Edward but a second to spring to their rescue, and, as he afterward expressed it: "Faith, there was no telling which was gladdest to meet me—the big horse or the little girl."

When they were safe at home Lassie told us her story.

She had reached Farmer Hannam's just as it began to rain, but found the house closed and every soul absent. She drove under the shed to wait for the storm to pass, but when the rain still continued to fall and night drew near, the child hardly knew what to do, and instinctively sought home.

All went well till she reached the wood road leading down the mountain, when, without a second's warning, the hook which held the breeching strap to the shaft pulled out and the strap dropped. The carriage plunged forward as far as the tug strap would let it, and these, soon slipping backward, let the whiffle-tree come squarely upon Laddie's haunches. After one frightened plunge he seemed to realize what had happened,

LADDIE AND LASSIE

and proved what it meant for a horse to be able to see both behind and before him.

After looking behind him for a moment, as though studying the situation and deciding upon the next move, he started slowly down the hill, taking a few steps and stopping, a few more and another pause, as though to assure the frightened child that she need fear nothing so long as she trusted to him. He had traveled more than half the journey with the phaeton bumping along behind him at every step before Edward met him, and he doubtless would have brought his charge safely home.

We asked Lassie why she had not gotten out to try to fix the breeching, for she knew how as well as we did, but she said that it was so dark, rainy, and slippery on the mountain road that she had lacked courage to do so, and had felt more faith in Laddie's ability to care for her than in her own.

And now I ask my readers if this is not a fair

LADDIE AND LASSIE

argument in favor of abolishing the use of a check-rein and blinders?

Had the horse been unable to *see* the cause of the trouble behind him, and had he not been free to turn his head as he chose and put it as close to the ground as he wished, who can guess what ignorance and terror might have caused even so faithful a creature to do? But the head was free to turn and reach in any direction, and the eyes were able to see all about him, as dear Mother Nature meant they should be. And when we add to this perfectly natural condition the affection he bore the little child who had always treated him kindly, it is no wonder that he promptly assumed the responsibility and took her life in his care.

WHERE TWINKLE SPENT THE
FOURTH OF JULY

WHERE TWINKLE SPENT THE FOURTH OF JULY

“**A**LL abo-a-r-d! First stop Stamford. All abo-a-r-d!” called out the conductor, then gave a wave of his hand and sprang upon the car step just as the train began to roll out of the great railway station.

It was a merry party, for a holiday was near at hand, and everybody was eager to leave the hot, dusty city, and longing for the cool sea breezes which awaited them a few miles beyond. People were laughing and talking as they settled themselves comfortably in their seats, or placed their belongings in the racks overhead.

In one of the cars a family party was settling itself, evidently for a long journey, and a long sojourn, once their destination was reached, for there was the “big box, little box, band box and

WHERE TWINKLE SPENT THE FOURTH OF JULY

bundle” to tell the story, to say nothing of several children, and several pets. One boy carried a bird cage into which he peeped every little while. Another had a box with a hole in the lid, and a bit of wire netting over it. This was Frisky’s house for the time being, and Frisky was a squirrel. The lady with them held a small Boston terrier in her arms, and the little girl beside her carried a basket, from which now and again came meek wails of protest against her confined quarters, for Twinkle did not like her narrow walls.

As our story has little to do with the other pets, we must pass them by, and tell the story of Twinkle, for Twinkle was a lady of high degree; a blue Maltese, with just a hint of Angora blood.

“Now pussykins, you must n’t cry,” said the little girl, as she slipped one small hand through the little crack in the basket lid. “We ’ve got to ride three whole hours, and if you begin to be bad now, I ’m afraid that they will make you ride in the baggage car, and think how ashamed

WHERE TWINKLE SPENT THE FOURTH OF JULY
you 'd feel. So be a good pussy, please do."

Twinkle gave a little throaty meow, and settled down for a time.

At last the journey was ended, and the family settled in the pretty cottage close to the water, where children and pets could enjoy themselves to their heart's content. In another week "the day we celebrate" would announce itself with boom and bang, and the children were making great preparations for it. Fair Point was well named, for it was a very fair point indeed, and better yet, a perfectly safe point. The long, sandy beach stretched far out into the Sound, and at low tide one could walk from the main land to the island more than half a mile from the shore.

Out on the island was a small cottage used by the family upon rare occasions only, for it was a little more than a covering for Mr. Hart when he chose to go out there for fishing. Sometimes when their own cottage was filled to overflowing with guests, Mrs. Hart would send the men

WHERE TWINKLE SPENT THE FOURTH OF JULY

over to the island to "roost," as she called it, but most of the time the place was shut up.

"Mary, have you seen Twinkle this morning?" asked Elsie, as she opened the door leading into the kitchen of the cottage. "I 've searched and searched for her, but I can't find her," and the little girl looked very unhappy, for Twinkle was her "Very own," and each child cared for his or her especial pet.

"No, Miss, I have n't. I saw her last night just before Mistress closed up the house, and then she was sitting out yonder on that sand-bar a-lookin' over toward the island as though she was a wonderin' who lived over there," and Mary, the cook, laughed at her own wit.

"Oh, I wish I could find her, my dear pussies," and Elsie went back into the cottage to renew her search. But it proved unavailing and no Twinkle was to be found. The family had now settled in the cottage three days, and on the day following their arrival Twinkle had vanished, leaving her little mistress sorely troubled.

WHERE TWINKLE SPENT THE FOURTH OF JULY

Four more days passed, and the morrow would usher in the Fourth of July. Fire works and fire crackers had been sent out from the city, and the boys were wild with delightful anticipations, but Elsie could not reconcile herself to Twinkle's loss. They had searched and made inquiry far and near, but all to no purpose; Twinkle could not be found.

The day had passed as all such days pass, and the children had enjoyed it thoroughly; at least the boys had, but Elsie still grieved for her lost pet and could not be comforted. Evening drew on, and the boys began to set up their fireworks, of which Mr. Hart had purchased a generous supply. Roman candles were stuck in the sand, and as the tide was out and the long sand-bar exposed, they placed a row of rockets almost across to the island.

Boom! Boom! went the bombs and candles, and whiz, sizz, bang! went the rockets one after another. Finally one rocket flew wildly into the air, whirled about, sputtered and then came tear-

ing to the earth again, to land upon the island opposite. Nobody gave it another thought, and it would have gone from their minds forever, had not its sparks set about creating a little celebration upon their own account.

“Oh, look, look at the island! The cottage is all afire!” cried Hugh, as he let fall the candle he was about to set off, and pointed wildly toward the little cottage.

“As true as I live!” cried Mr. Hart. “Come quickly boys, we can get across and maybe save it by prompt action. Get all the pails you can find and follow me. Don’t waste a moment,” and off he tore, followed by his own boys and half a dozen others from the cottages near at hand. Several other gentlemen had seen the fire and were now running up to offer help, and in a few moments a regular fire brigade was formed and running toward the burning cottage. Mrs. Hart and several other ladies followed close at their heels, with Elsie and some of her little friends running beside her. Mr. Hart

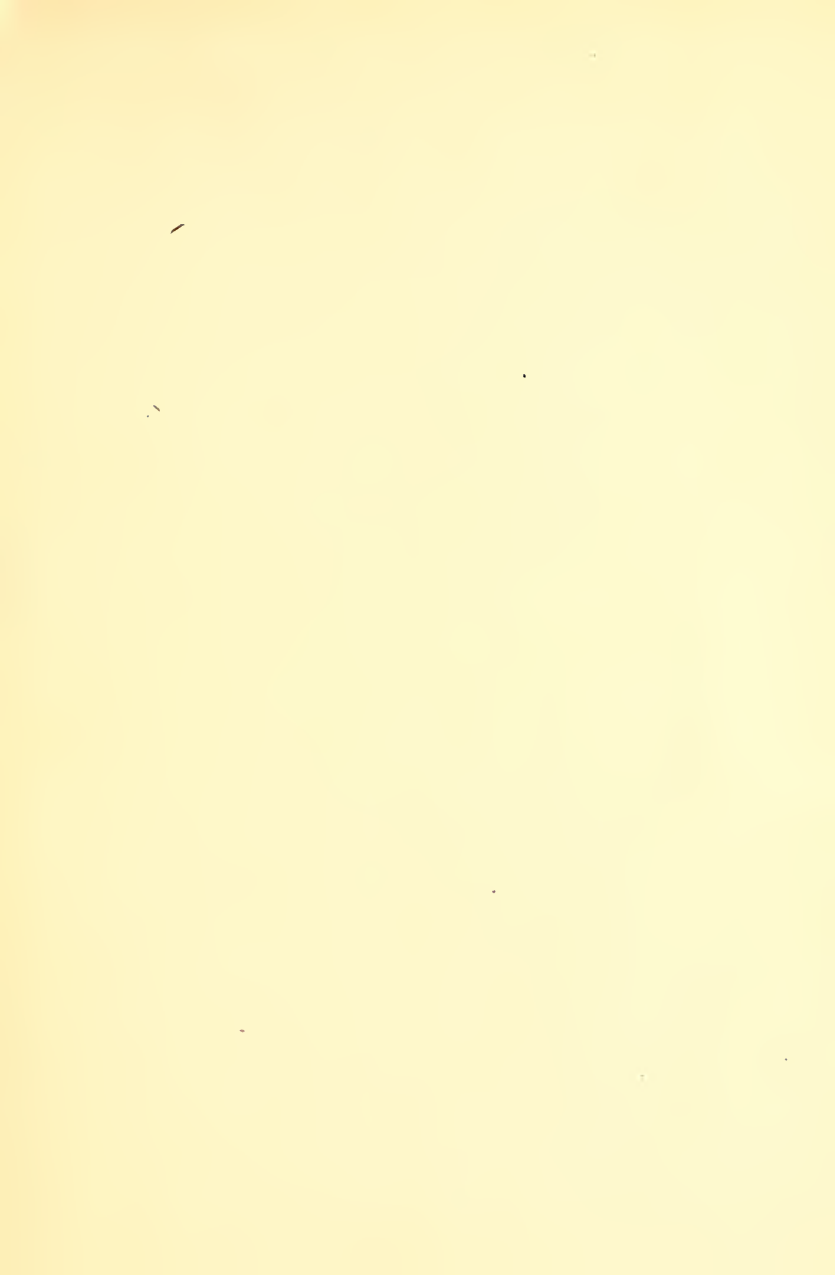
rushed toward the burning building, and dashed upon it his pail of water, but just as he did so, tripped and nearly fell over a small animal which came scurrying from the cottage, to drop something at his very feet, and then rush back toward the house.

Mr. Hart stooped down and picked up a tiny white kitten, but before he could say a word, a little gray figure came running toward him, bearing in its mouth a little black brother to the mite in his hands.

“As I live it ’s Twinkle,” he cried, and hastily handing over the two kittens rushed around toward the rear door, which the flames had not yet reached. The light from the fire made everything plainly visible, and there in one corner of the little outhouse which they had used as a bath house, was Twinkle with two more kittens; one black and white, the other a little tiger. In the further corner lay the mother of the little kittens, dead. Doubtless the mother love had given her strength to reach her little ones, and

then life departed. She had doubtless been dead several days, and somehow Twinkle had discovered her babies, and cared for them, for Twinkle had just reared a family in the city, and seen them carefully bestowed in new homes before leaving town.

The kittens were quickly moved to a place of safety and in a little while the fire was extinguished. Then Twinkle was looked after. How she had managed to live on the island all that time, and cared for the orphan kittens, was a mystery to her owner, but it was a poor, thin, forlorn Twinkle which they carried back to the main land, and a ravenously hungry one too. The adopted kittens were placed in a basket, and their gracious foster-mother took her place beside them with a warbly meow as though to say: "I suppose I ought to be an advocate of Fourth of July celebrations, or my beautiful foster-children would never have been found, but, really, I should not have minded if the discovery had been accompanied with just a little less thrilling scenes."



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